

6. October 2025
THIRD LETTER OF ST. JOHN
Conclusion of the Johannine Letters

3 Jn 1:1-15

The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in health; I know that it is well with your soul. For I greatly rejoiced when some of the brethren arrived and testified to the truth of your life, as indeed you do follow the truth. No greater joy can I have than this, to hear that my children follow the truth. Beloved, it is a loyal thing you do when you render any service to the brethren, especially to strangers, who have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey as befits God's service. For they have set out for his sake and have accepted nothing from the heathen. So we ought to support such men, that we may be fellow workers in the truth. I have written something to the church; but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge my authority. So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, prating against me with evil words. And not content with that, he refuses himself to welcome the brethren, and also stops those who want to welcome them and puts them out of the church. Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. He who does good is of God; he who does evil has not seen God. Demetrius has testimony from every one, and from the truth itself; I testify to him too, and you know my testimony is true. I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink; I hope to see you soon, and we will talk together face to face. Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends, every one of them.

Today's meditation concludes our series on the Letters of St. John. Before we approach the third letter, let us recall the central points of the first two once again.

They are addressed to a young Christian community already confronted by false teachers who deny the Incarnation of the Son of God. Such denial poses a lethal threat to the Christian faith because if true, the entire plan of salvation would cease to make sense. Consequently, faith would be lost, along with the shield that protects us from further error.

What is particularly dangerous about many false doctrines is that they also contain some truth or half-truths, so that they can more easily deceive the faithful than if they were to argue with an obvious lie. In this context, the Apostle John warns about the Antichrist, whose spirit is already manifest in the world. He leads to the denial of Christ's divinity, preventing men from finding the way of salvation or leading them away from it.

What is the antidote? The unshakable profession of faith, handed down by the apostles and guarded by the Church as a treasure of truth throughout the centuries. Neither the Church's doctrine nor its moral teachings can be curtailed without serious consequences that wound the souls of men deeply. In this sense, St. John repeatedly exhorts us to fulfill God's commandments so that we may live in the truth.

Brotherly love is a recurring theme in the Johannine letters. Whoever loves his brother bears witness to the love of God, for it leads to love of neighbor. One cannot pass by a suffering brother, and if he sins, one must pray for him. Therefore, the Apostle considers love of neighbor a true fruit of love of God.

In today's reading of the Third Letter, addressed to Gaius, the Apostle notes that he has received news of his charity. *"Beloved, it is a loyal thing you do when you render any service to the brethren, especially to strangers."* He encourages Gaius, who is evidently a noble-hearted man, to provide for these stranger brethren for their journey: *"For they have set out for the sake of His name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles."*

The Apostle John also does not overlook the tensions in the community, specifically related to a certain Diotrophes, who covets the first place in the community and even slanders the presbyters, thus sinning against brotherly love. The Apostle clearly expresses his judgment on such conduct: *"Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. He who does good is of God; he who does evil has not seen God."*

The letter concludes with a positive reference to Demetrius and a greeting of peace.

What can we apply from the Johannine letters in general? The key points already mentioned:

- Remain faithful to the true faith.

- Keep God's commandments.
- Distance yourself from the Antichrist and all false teachers.
- Put the love of brother into practice.

All this is equally valid today as it was in the time of the holy Apostle.

Meditation on the Gospel of the Day: <https://en.elijamission.net/2025/07/13/>